

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 ACDA-05 NIC-01 FAA-00

DOT-00 /087 W

----- 036260

R 080945Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7956

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 4668

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, INWW PK

SUBJECT:INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

REF: ISLAMABAD 2970

SUMMARY: THE INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS GIVEN US A COPY OF MRS. GANDHI'S MARCH 20 LETTER TO BHUTTO, WHICH WARNS ABOUT THE BURDENS OF AN ARMS RACE AND OFFERS TO EXPLORE "BUILT-IN SAFEGUARDS" TO REDUCE TENSIONS. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY APPEARS UNEASY IN JUSTIFYING MRS. GANDHI'S APRIL 2 REMARK ABOUT BALUCH AND PATHAN PROBLEMS IN PAKISTAN AS A REPLY TO BHUTTO'S REMARKS ABOUT KASHMIR. END SUMMARY.

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1. MEA JOINT SECRETARY (PAKISTANVWL CHIB ASKED POLCOUNSELOR

TO COME TO FOREIGN MINISTRY APRIL 8, WHEN HE HANDED OVER A COPY OF MRS. GANDHI'S MARCH 20 LETTER TO BHUTTO (TEXT TRANSMITTED SEPTTEL) WITH OBSERVATION GOI SIMPLY WANTED TO KEEP USG INFORMED. THE PRESS WAS BRIEFED ON THE LETTER APRIL 7 BUT WAS NOT GIVEN THE TEXT.

2. KEY PARAGRAPHS OF GANDHI LETTER NOTE THAT WHILE EACH COUNTRY HAS LEGITIMATE CONCERN FOR ITS SECURITY AND MEANS OF PROTECTING ITS INDEPENDENCE, QUEST FOR ARMS PARITY "WITHOUT CONSIDERING COUNTRY'S SIZE, LAND FRONTIERS AND COASTLINE AND DIVERSE PROBLEMS" MAY GENERATE "UNENDING SEARCH FOR ACQUISITION OF WEAPONS AND LEAD ONLY TO GREATER TENSIONS AND WEAKENING OF ECONOMIC ENDEAVORS." NEED INSTEAD TO EX-

ERCISE "SELF RESTRAINT AND (MAKE) CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO BUILD MUTUAL CONFIDENCE." GOI WILLING TO EXPLORE "BUILT-IN SAFEGUARDS" TO REDUCE TENSIONS. MRS. GANDHI REGRETTED GOP REACTION TO AGREEMENT WITH SHEIKH ABDULLAH AND, REFERRING TO NOVEMBER 73 AND JANUARY 74 EXCHANGES AS WELL AS BHUTTO'S REFERENCE TO A "LINE OF PEACE" IN JAMMU/KASHMIR, SAID INDIANS SAW SHEIKH ABDULLAH'S RETURN AS "HELP RATHER THAN HINDRANCE IN ACHIEVEMENT OF FRIENDLY RELATIONS."

3. CHIB SAID INDIANS WERE STILL TRYING TO WORK ON SCHEDULE FOR POSSIBLE CIVIL AVIATION TALKS CONSONANT WITH PLANS OF BOTH INDIAN CIVIL AVIATION OFFICIALS AND FOREIGN SECRETARY. INDIANS LAST WEEK INVITED PAKS TO SEND TRADE MISSION TO INDIA IN APRIL AND WERE AWAITING PAK REPLY. CHIB MADE IT CLEAR THAT INDIANS STILL EXPECT PAKS TO MAKE SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE IN THEIR POSITION ON CIVIL AVIATION. INDIANS HAVE ALSO LEFT INITIATIVE IN PAK HANDS SO FAR AS RESUMPTION OF RAIL TRAFFIC IS CONCERNED, BUT CHIB THOUGHT THAT IF SUBSTANTIAL QUANTITIES OF STEEL AND LIGHT ENGINEERING GOODS WERE TO BE PURCHASED BY PAKISTAN, THIS WOULD PROVIDE INCENTIVE TO RESUME RAIL TRAFFIC.

4. ASKED ABOUT MRS. GANDHI'S APRIL 2 REMARK ABOUT BALUCH AND PATHAN PROBLEMS IN PAKISTAN, CHIB SEEMED SOMEWHAT EMBARRASSED BUT ARGUED THAT SO LONG AS BHUTTO AND GOP CRITICIZED SHEIKH ABDULLAH AND INDIAN POLICY IN KASHMIR, IT COULD NOT BE EX-CONFIDENTIAL

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CLUDED THAT INDIANS WOULD FEEL FREE TO MAKE REMARKS ABOUT INTERNAL PAKISTANI PROBLEMS. CHIB SAID THIS WAS MATTER TWO FOREIGN SECRETARIES COULD DISCUSS WHEN THEY MET. (COMMENT: IT SOUNDED TO US AS THOUGH MRS. GANDHI, IN RESPONDING TO TWO SPECIFIC AD HOC QUESTIONS PUT TO HER, HAD GONE FURTHER THAN MEA MIGHT HAVE WANTED AND LEFT MINISTRY WITH RATHER STICKY PROBLEM OF JUSTIFICATION. WE WOULD NOT ANTICIPATE GOI OFFICIALS WILL PRUSUE LINE MRS. GANDHI TOOK IN PUBLIC.)

5. IN REPLY TO A QUESTION, CHIB SAID HE DID NOT EXCLUDE POSSIBILITY THAT SUBJECT OF RESTORATION OF MISSIONS MIGHT ARISE IN NEXT ROUND OF INDO-PAK TALKS BUT SAID GOI HAD TO DO SOME FURTHER THINKING ON THE SUBJECT.

6. IN RESPONSE TO CHIB QUESTION AS TO US READING OF PAK POSITION, POLCONSELOR DREW ON PARA 2 AND 6 OF REFTTEL. CHIB DID NOT RAISE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT CURRENT STATUS OF PAK INTEREST IN US MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND POLCOUNSELOR VOLUNTEERED NOTHING.

7. THERE IS A MAJOR DEBATE SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 9-10 IN PARLIAMENT ON INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY AND WE WILL REPORT ANY REMARKS BY GOI SPOKESMEN WHICH SHED ANY FURTHER LIGHT ON MRS. GANDHI'S APRIL 2 COMMENTS.
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